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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Port Conditions in Gdansk: Port Divisions/Soviet Vessels/
Port Activity/Security Regulations/Private Sailing

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Port Divisions

2. "The port of Gdansk is divided into:
 - a) Port Wislany - The Wislana port. Sugar and all piece goods are loaded there.
 - b) Port Rudo-Weglowy now also called 'Gorniczy' - The port where coal and iron ore are loaded.
 - c) Port Wolnoclowy - The free port. Machinery is loaded and unloaded here; also all the shipments to China.
 - d) PAGED - Port Drzewny - The timber harbor.
 - e) Kanal Kaszubski - The Kashubian Canal. Metals, wire, pipes etc are loaded here. There are many warehouses along the canal.
3. "The Westerplatte basin serves naval purposes. It has been put in order during the last two years and is now surrounded with a high barbed wire fence. No civilians are admitted. The guard is strong: sailors, lights playing on the

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fence by night, but hitherto no bloodhounds. Everywhere there are WOP posts and notices that persons approaching forbidden areas will be shot without warning. The Westerplatte Quay, however, is an ordinary trade quay on one of the canals of the port.

Soviet Vessels

4. "The Soviets have no special bases at Gdansk but anchor some vessels at Westerplatte. The Soviet vessels are usually trawlers, mostly 30-50 m long but sometimes only 15 m long. Occasionally a Soviet torpedo or gunboat can be observed, but no larger naval vessels. Sometimes there are about ten Soviet vessels. On 29 September 53 there were none. The local people have no idea what these Soviet vessels do at Gdansk since the official Soviet base is at Szczecin. Possibly they check on the Polish Navy, but people think that their visits serve a psychological purpose. The Soviets want to intimate: 'We are here. We are ready for action.'

Port Activity

5. "The number of ships calling at the ports of Gdynia and Gdansk has fallen off steeply in the last 18 months. Immediately after World War II, while UNRRA was still in operation, about 55-70 vessels would be lying in Gdansk harbor at once and seven or eight waiting in the roads to enter. In 1951 and the beginning of 1952, at the Westerplatte Quay alone, at least 10 ships would be anchored at once; often ships lined their quay in rows of three. As of September 1953 there were often no more than 10 ships in the whole harbor of Gdansk.
6. "We can give no figures for Gdynia harbor, but activity there appears as slack as at Gdansk. Gdynia and Gdansk have been an economic entity since 1945-46. Technically, however, the two ports are separate. Each has its own facilities, except for the largest cranes, which are shared. In Gdynia all the quays are now built of reinforced concrete. In Gdansk old wooden quays are still in use. Some of the new quays are of timber below water level and concrete above.
7. "There are four or five pilots [names unknown to sources] in the port of Gdansk and about the same number in Gdynia. Under the present regime these pilots are picked for political rather than vocational qualifications. Thus, the most responsible job in a port is entrusted to petty CP functionaries or sympathizers. Accidents are frequent. A serious one occurred on 29 July 53:

Not far from Westerplatte the Wisla channel has a sudden curve which is the most dangerous spot for ships in Gdansk harbour. Every time a ship passes this spot she has to whistle five times. The bend is called the 'Five Whistle Bend' (zakret 5-ci gwiizkow). It lies between the Kapitanat Portu and Nabrzeze Gornicze. Colloquially that last quay is always called the Coal Quay; the name 'gornicze' is used only officially -- just as the colliers are always called 'weglowce', although the regime calls them 'rudoweglowce'.

On 29 July the chief pilot of Gdansk was piloting the large freight steamer s/s WARYNSKI (without a cargo) through the Zakret 5-Ciu Gwiizkow. In the middle of the bend the forward tug veered too much to the right and too close to the quay. The pilot ordered the WARYNSKI's front anchor cast instead of commanding 'stop' and ordering the rear tug to reverse. The WARYNSKI bumped against the quay, her stem and propeller half rising out of the water. The rear tug rammed into the WARYNSKI. The WARYNSKI was badly damaged as was one of the tugs. The authorities considered the accident an act of sabotage. [redacted] there were several arrests and a political as well as technical investigation. [redacted] not know who was arrested in addition to the pilot./

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8. "On 3 September 53 a storm tore the roofs off a row of storehouses on the Nabrzeze Wislane (Wisla Quay) in Gdansk. The storehouses had been rebuilt in 1952 and covered with completely new roofs. The work had been done according to government specifications -- with the usual saving in labor and material. Instead of having paid a little more for the roofs in 1952 the State will now have to fork out the price of entirely new replacements.
9. "The new building of the Kommandantura of the Polish Navy (Komenda Marynarki Wojennej) was finished in summer 1952. It is situated in Kosciuszko Square, not far from PIM (Panstwowy Instytut Meteorologiczny, colloquially called 'Pimus'). All the construction work was done by labor battalions (bataliony pracy), not by units of the Sluzba Polsce.
10. "The electrical department of the harbor administration in Gdansk consists of the following men: chief electrician for the port, department heads (Kierownik Widzialu) section heads (Kierownik Oddzialu), masters (Mistrz), brigade leaders and regular journeymen electricians. A journeyman electrician in the free port, whose job consists of repairing electric motors on ships, tugs and cranes and operating and repairing transformers, earns about 1500 zl per month (including all premiums and overtime payments).

Security Regulations

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14.

[REDACTED] On 23 September new regulations were introduced for the guarding and loading of foreign ships in Polish ports:

a) Henceforth every foreign ship is to be guarded not by two WOP soldiers, as hitherto, but three. If a crane is used in loading, a WOP sentry stands behind the crane operator.

b) The 20 WOP soldiers who search every 500-600 ton ship before she leaves port (larger ships are searched by correspondingly larger units) will henceforth be provided not only with pistols but also with torches, long sharp iron rods and tear gas.

c) In loading coal the cranes are not to lower their load into the hold but to drop it high above the hatch so that the guard may see plainly that no person is being dropped.

15.

"That last regulation has its own history. At first coal was loaded in the ordinary fashion by lowering it into the hold. Then - possibly after escapes on colliers - the authorities ordered it dropped high above the hatches. This caused foreign importers to protest, as the coal is broken into small pieces by such handling and is of a different, inferior composition on arrival at its destination than when it was inspected on shore. The Polish authorities, who are keen to sell their coal, had to agree to loading by lowering the coal into the hold. But they have now reverted to the old method. The provocation theory may not be so wrong; Poles attempting to escape via a crane and a [REDACTED] provide the regime with a strong argument if the coal importers should again protest against the loading methods."

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16.

"Dogs are no longer used in searching ships in Gdansk and Gdynia. This practice was dropped in the early summer of 1952. Refugees have become too afraid of dogs: they pour gasoline on themselves and their closest friends and cover themselves with tobacco dust. Under such circumstances the dogs are useless."

Private Sailing

17.

"The Budowlane Sailing Club is attached to the Szkoła Baletu i Okretow. The small club sailboats have the right to sail in the bay of Gdansk, the so-called Zatoka. WOP clearance and a sailing permit (przepustka) are necessary. The sailors have their boats cleared at the WOP post near Kapitan Portu in the estuary."

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